Linking of River Basins to Harness Water

*233. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the Minister of WATER RSEOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to link river basins to harness water like Brahmaputra water, which is going waste to feed the parched areas and for its utilisation to feed Eastern and Western parts of West Bengal;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) how it is to be financed?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI ARJUN SETHI): (a) to (c) The erstwhile Ministry of Irrigation (now Ministry of Water Resrources) and Central Water Commission have formulated a National Perspective Plan for Water Resources Development which envisages inter linkage between various Peninsular rivers and Himalayan rivers for transfer of water from surplus basins to water deficit basins for optimum utilization of water resources. The Government of India has established National Water Development Agency (NWDA) as an Autonomous Society in July, 1982 to *inter alia* carry out the water balance and feasibility studies of National Perspective Plan. According to pre-fessibility studies carried out by NWDA, Manas-Sankosh-Tista-Ganga, Subernarekha- Mahanadi, Ganga-Damodar-Subernarekha and Farakka-Sunderbans links of National Perspective Plan envisage providing irrigation to an area of 11.13 lakh hactare in West Bengal. Issue of arranging for finance will arise after detailed project reports are prepared and consensus is reached among the concerned States.

Long Distance Telephony

*234 SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Prime Minister had announced on the 14th July, 2000, in the State IT Minister's Conference that National Long Distance Telephony will be opened for the private sector companies by 15th of August, 2000;

(b) if so, whether the Telecom Commission has finalised its study of the recommendations of the TRAI on this subject and concretised the stipulation for entry for new players;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) whether such decision of the Telecom Commission has been approved by the Cabinet, and if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) While the Telecom Commission has recommended on the various parameters in this regard like entry fee, revenue sharing, area of operations, network roll-out obligations, in the light of the recommendations given by TRAI, the matter is being processed for obtaining appropriate approval of Government.

Investigation into cases against M/s. U.P. Airways

*235. SHRI KHAN GHUFRAN ZAHIDI: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the number of cases of investigations which are pending against M/s U.P. Airways and its Directors;

(b) the names of Directors against whom the case of financial irregularities and loan default from banks has been registered; and

(c) the action being taken against the Directors of U.P. Airways involved in above matters?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHARAD YADAV): (a) to (c) A complaint had been received in this Ministry that Shri Subhas Gulati, M.D. of U.P. Airways had cheated M/s Canara Bank and was involved in many criminal cases. CBI has taken over all papers pertaining to this case for investigation.

Loan received by NHAI for road projects

*236 SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Centre has decided to take on the liability of servicing the debts from multilateral lending agencies for highways development;

(b) whether it is a fact that this will give the NHAI greater manoeuvrability